

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0205

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJECT: AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IS REPORTEDLY CONVINCED THAT
KHURRAM'S ASSASSIN DID NOT ACT ALONE

REF: KABUL 8699

1. SUMMARY. THE AFGHAN AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATING THE
NOVEMBER 16 MURDER OF PLANNING MINISTER ALI AHMAD KHURRAM
ARE REPORTEDLY CONVINCED THAT THE KILLER WAS PART OF A LARGER
CONSPIRACY AIMED AT SEVERAL CABINET MINISTERS, AND THAT THIS
PLOT WAS CONSTRUCTED BY THE ULTRA RIGHT-WING IKHWAN-E-MUSLIMIN
(MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD). THE GOVERNMENT, APPARENTLY FOR ITS OWN
REASONS, AND, INITIALLY AT LEAST, IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRM
EVIDENCE, HAS SUPPORTED THE CONSPIRACY THEORY PUBLICLY SINCE
THE ASSASSINATION (MOST RECENTLY IN THE DECEMBER 20 ANNOUNCEMENT
ACCOMPANYING THE CONFESSION OF KHURRAM'S MURDERER). THE
AUTHORITIES NOW APPEAR TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT A PLOT DID IN FACT
EXIST, AND THAT THEY MAY INDEED FACE A RADICAL OPPOSITION
MOVEMENT OF STILL UNKNOWN STRENGTH AND INTENTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE RECEIVED A RECENT REPORT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF
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AFGHANISTAN (GOA) INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED IN THE KHURRAM CASE
NOW BELIEVE WITH CERTAINTY THAT THE KILLING WAS MERELY ONE
ELEMENT OF A LARGER CONSPIRACY ON THE PART OF THE RADICALLY
CONSERVATIVE IKHWAN-E-MUSLIMIN. THE AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY
HAVE UNCOVERED EVIDENCE OF SEVERAL CONSPIRATORIAL MEETINGS
IN SEPARATE LOCATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY INVOLVING MEMBERS OF
THIS ORGANIZATION, AND A NUMBER OF ALLEGED PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN

ARRESTED AND ARE UNDERGOING INTERROGATION.

3. COMMENT: SINCE THE ASSASSINATION, THE GOA HAS TAKEN THE CONSISTENT LINE THAT THE KILLING WAS A PART OF A LARGER PLOT, BUT MANY OBSERVERS CONCLUDED AT THE TIME THAT THIS WAS A POSITION TAKEN FOR ESSENTIALLY SELF-SERVING REASONS, RATHER THAN ONE

BASED ON HARD EVIDENCE. AFTER WEEKS OF INVESTIGATION, HOWEVER, AND THE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED CONFESSION BY THE KILLER, THE AUTHORITIES APPEAR NOW TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT A GENUINE PLOT ON THE PART OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WAS INDEED AFOOT. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE INTENTIONS AND STRENGTH OF THE PLOTTERS HAVE NOT YET BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT ARRESTS AND INTERROGATIONS REPORTEDLY CONTINUE.

4. AS FOR THE FATE OF THE CONFESSED KILLER, ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, HE HAS TWICE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, AND ANOTHER RUMOR STATES THAT HE AND SEVERAL UNIDENTIFIED COLLEAGUES WILL BE EXECUTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. SHOULD THESE REPORTS RE CURRENT GOVERNMENT VIEWS TURN OUT TO BE ACCURATE, FURTHER GOVERNMENT MOVES AGAINST RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION ELEMENTS COULD BE FORTHCOMING OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, PROBABLY ACCOMPANIED BY A FAIRLY INTENSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN AIMED AT PUBLICIZING THE REGIME'S VIGILANCE, AND UNDERSCORING IMPLICITLY THE ATTENDANT RISKS OF UNDERTAKING CONFIDENTIAL

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ANY ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT SMACK OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

6. WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE SIZE OR POTENTIAL INFLUENCE OF THE IKHWAN-E-MUSLIMIN MOVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. WE PRESUME THAT ITS RADICALLY CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM WOULD APPEAL ESPECIALLY TO THOSE ELEMENTS OF THIS SOCIETY WHICH MIGHT OPPOSE SOME OR ALL OF THIS REGIME'S REFORM PROGRAMS. IN THIS REGARD, WE HAVE RECEIVED A RECENT REPORT THAT THE JAMIYAT-E-ISLAM (SOCIETY OF ISLAM), A LOCAL RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATION WHICH PROBABLY DRAWS HEAVILY ON THE INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP, HAS BEEN SPREADING ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA AND HAS BEEN RECRUITING MEMBERS IN ONE AFGHAN ARMY UNIT. THESE PARTICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE REPORTEDLY KNOWN TO THE AUTHORITIES AND INVESTIGATIONS ARE UNDERWAY. NEVERTHELESS, SUCH ACTIVITIES IN THE MILITARY ON THE PART OF RADICAL RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS, COUPLED WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING KHURRAM'S MURDER, ARE LIKELY TO PROVOKE A CERTAIN CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE TRUE EXTENT OF ANY "ACTIVIST" RIGHTIST OPPOSITION WHICH MIGHT EXIST IN THIS COUNTRY.
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